



National Child Care Information Center

A service of the Child Care Bureau

NCCIC

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STATE AT-HOME INFANT CARE INITIATIVES

The following is a sample of information on State initiatives to support at-home parental care for infants (also known as at-home infant care [AHIC]).

Missouri

In 1998, Missouri House Bill 1519 established the Early Childhood Development, Education, and Care Fund from a percentage of riverboat gaming fees. This legislation set aside funding to increase capacity of, and access to, quality early childhood programs for all Missouri families. The funds are distributed through grant programs, certificates for families, and provide an increase in State child care subsidies for child care programs accredited by a recognized accrediting organization. Additional information is available on the Web at <http://www.dss.mo.gov/cd/early/>.

Recent contracts have been awarded for a “Stay at Home Parent Program.” The following is information about the current RFP for this program:

■ *Request for Proposal (RFP) B3Z04147 “Stay at Home Parent Program”* (February 20, 2004), by the Division of Purchasing and Materials Management for the Missouri Department of Social Services, Office of Early Childhood, requests proposals for increasing the quality of early childhood education services for children from birth to age 3 whose parents stay at home. The RFP includes the following information:

2.2.1 For purposes of this RFP, the following definitions shall apply:

- a. Parent is defined as an adult caretaker with ongoing physical custody of a child. This may be a parent, legal guardian, relative, or non-relative.
- b. Stay-at-home parent is defined as a parent who has a child under 3 years of age, has household income of under 185% of poverty, and who is:
(1) not employed (receives Temporary Assistance or other income); (2) employed 20 hours or less per week; (3) participating in an education or job training program; (4) living in a shelter or temporary housing; (5) a teen parent; and/or (6) referred by the state agency as “at risk” for physical, emotional, social, or educational abuse/neglect. (page 4)

25.12 The contractor shall ensure that the value of the monthly services and certificates received by the stay-at-home parent per child must equal the monthly

average cost for subsidized childcare within the geographic area served by the contractor.

a. The monthly average cost for subsidized childcare within the geographic area served by the contractor shall be based on the following daily rates: In the metro areas \$15.00 per day (St. Louis City and the following counties, St. Louis, Jefferson, Franklin, St. Charles, Greene, Jackson, Cass, Clay, Lafayette, Platte, Ray, Johnson, and Boone); in sub-metro areas \$13.00 per day (Christian, Jasper, Newton, and Buchanan); and in the rest of the state \$10.00 per day. The total value of the monthly services will depend on the number of days of service provided and the value of certificates or other resources provided to the family.

b. The value of the monthly services and certificates received per child by a particular stay-at-home parent may exceed the monthly average cost for subsidized childcare within the geographic area served by the contractor if either of the following conditions exist:

- 1) The stay-at-home parent successfully participates in PAT (Parents as Teachers), home-based Early Head Start, Even Start, Baby Boost, Bridge to the Future, Nurses for Newborns, or a similar parent education program approved by the state agency; or
- 2) The stay-at-home parent has a higher economic need than 185% of the federal poverty level. (page 7)

This resource is available on the Web at <http://www.oa.mo.gov/purch/bids/b3z04147.pdf>. Information on the July 2001 awardees of the RFP is available on the Web at <http://www.dss.mo.gov/cd/early/award/sah.htm>; information on the September 2002 awardees of the RFP is available on the Web at <http://www.dss.mo.gov/cd/early/award/sah2.htm>.

Montana

■ “Part 7: Child Care” (2003), in “Chapter 2: Children’s Services; Title 52: Family Services,” *Montana Code Annotated 2003*, by the Montana Legislative Services, provides a definition of the At-Home Infant Care (AHIC) program and eligibility requirements. This resource is available on the Web at http://data.opi.state.mt.us/bills/mca_toc/52_2_7.htm. “Section 52-2-710” provides a direct link to this definition; this resource is available on the Web at <http://data.opi.state.mt.us/bills/mca/52/2/52-2-710.htm>.

■ “Montana Women Score Victory on Valuing Caregiving” (September 2002), by Betty Holcomb, for *Women’s E News*, discusses Montana’s At-Home Infant Care pilot program. The article states:

Montana’s “At-Home Infant Care Program” provides parents that have incomes 150 percent of the poverty line or less with up to \$384 a month to stay home with

their infants for up to two years, the same amount the state pays child-care providers to do the same work.

Montana is the fourth state to create such a program and the only one to do it at the insistence of women themselves.

This resource is available on the Web at

<http://www.womensenews.org/article.cfm/dyn/aid/1024/context/cover/>.

■ *At Home Infant Care: Non TANF Welfare Eligibility* (December 1, 2001), by the Montana Department of Public Health and Community Services, states:

During the 2001 Legislative Session a bill was introduced to establish a state funded program allowing parents to stay at home for up to 24 months while caring for a child less than 2 years of age. This bill never became law. However, due to the critical need for infant care, the importance of the first years in a child's development and potential cost savings to the child care scholarship program, the Department agreed to develop a pilot program for At-Home-Infant Care [AHIC].

This program is modeled after the Minnesota At-Home-Infant child care program. It allows low-income parents to stay at home with their infants as part of their child care assistance program for low-income families. The general characteristics of this program include:

- Families must have met a Non-TANF Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship minimum hourly work requirement for at least one month within the three full-month period before application;
- Families must meet the income eligibility criteria used for the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship program at the time of application, and when the family's AHIC benefits begin;
- Families must meet the household eligibility criteria used for the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship program when the family's AHIC benefits begin. This includes child support requirements;
- Families must provide full-time care for their infants and toddlers;
- Limited to a lifetime total of 24 individual (\$378) payments from the At-Home-Infant Care Program;
- Families are not allowed to obtain child care subsidies for non-parental care for any other children in their family;
- Families are permitted to pursue employment or education; and
- Families are not permitted to access the TANF cash assistance program even if they are income eligible. (pp. 1-2)

Additional information is available on the Web at

<http://www.betterbabycare.org/docs/MONTANACC2-3a2001DecAt-HomeInfant.doc>.

■ **Working for Equality and Economic Liberation (WEEL)**

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WEEL is a grassroots, economic and social justice nonprofit organization. Their mission is to eradicate the myths, stereotypes, and stigmas that are harmful to low income families through advocacy, action, and education. WEEL works on the local, State, and national level to provide a voice for families who continue to sink further into poverty in a time of recession and increasing State health and human services cuts nationwide.

WEEL supports Montana's At Home Infant Care (AHIC) program, which was developed from input given by families living in poverty. Promoting and implementing this program is a joint effort by WEEL and the Montana Early Childhood Department. Additional information on AHIC, including the characteristics of the program, is available on the Web at <http://www.weeleepowers.org/state.html#AHIC>.

New Mexico

New Mexico's Legislature is in the process of discussing AHIC in the 2004 Regular Session.

■ *Senate Bill 553: For the Welfare Reform Oversight Committee* (February 2004), introduced by Linda M. Lopez, for the 46th Legislature, State of New Mexico, Second Session, 2004, provides a definition, eligibility requirements, appropriation, and description of a pilot program for an AHIC program. This resource is available on the Web at <http://legis.state.nm.us/Sessions/04%20Regular/bills/senate/SB0553.html>. A list of actions taken on this bill is available on the Web at http://legis.state.nm.us/newsite/actionsdisplay.asp?Bill_ID=62553.

Utah

■ *At-Home Parents (Code 01)* (updated December 2003), provided by the Utah Income Tax Information Web site, sponsored by the State of Utah, describes income tax credits for parents and other caregivers who provide full-time, at-home care for infants. This resource is available on the Web at <http://incometax.utah.gov/creditsathomeparent.html>.

■ *A Catalog Of Tax-Based Approaches For Financing Child Care and Appendix* (November 2001), by the National Women's Law Center (NWLC), has the following information about a tax credit for full-time, parental care for infants:

5. Stay-at-Home Parent Credit:

A few states provide tax assistance to parents caring for their young children at home. For example, Utah provides a \$100 nonrefundable tax credit to an income-eligible family that provides full-time, parental care to an infant less than a year old. (page 34)

This resource is available on the Web at

<http://www.nwlc.org/pdf/ACatalogOfTaxBasedApproachesForFinancingChildCareAndAppendixRev.pdf>.

Historical Resources

Minnesota

The Minnesota Department of Children, Families, and Learning “At-Home Infant Child Care Program (AHIC)” allowed families who had a child under age 1 year, were eligible for or received Basic Sliding Fee child care assistance, and provided full-time care for their infant child to receive a subsidy in lieu of child care assistance. However, the State financial situation in 2003 led to decreases in funding for child care, and a repeal of the AHIC program. The resources below provide a sample of historical data on Minnesota’s AHIC program, and are listed chronologically.

■ “Article 9: Child Care and Miscellaneous Provision” (June 19, 2003), in *House Research Act Summary: Chapter 14: Health and Human Services, a 2003 First Special Session*, by the Minnesota House of Representatives, makes modifications to the child care assistance program. Indication that AHIC is eliminated from the program include:

Child care fund. Amends § 119B.011, subd. 6. Removes references to the at-home infant care program in the definition of “child care fund.”

Income. Amends § 119B.011, subd. 15. Removes references to the at-home infant care program in the definition of “income.”

Date of eligibility for assistance. Amends § 119B.09, subd. 7. Removes references to the at-home infant care program.

Repealer. Repeals the at-home infant child care program, provider rate bonus for accreditation, [Minnesota Investment Family Program] MFIP social services child care sunset and report, and an obsolete child care report.

This resource is available on the Web at

http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hrd/as/83/2003-1/as014.html#_Toc43782482.

■ *2003 News From the Hill Newsletter: Child Care* (2003), by Carrie Thomas, JobsNow Coalition, for Legal Services Advocacy Project (LSAP), discusses the changes made to the child care assistance program. It states:

The final child care changes for the 2003 session were extensive. Through a series of policy changes, over \$85 million in state funds were cut from the child care assistance programs. Cost shifts to families through eligibility reductions, repeal of the at-home infant care program, and increased co-payments totaled about \$16.8 million.

This resource is available on the Web at

<http://www.lsapmn.org/RTF2.cfm?pagename=NewPageName1&areaid=35&subpage=CHILD%20CARE%20-%20>

<http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hrd/as/82/as279.html>.
<http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hrd/as/82/2001-1/as003.html>.
http://cfl.state.mn.us/html/mde_home.htm.

■ *House Research Act Summary: Chapter 279* (April 2002), a 2002 Regular Session, by the Minnesota House of Representatives, clarifies changes to the AHIC program made during the 2001 Legislative Session, and makes changes to child care assistance definitions. This resource is available on the Web at <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hrd/as/82/as279.html>.

■ “Article 1: Children and Family Support Programs” (July 2001), in *House Research Act Summary: Chapter 3*, by the Minnesota House of Representatives, indicates a modification to the determination of participation in the AHIC program. This resource is available on the Web at <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hrd/as/82/2001-1/as003.html>.

■ *At-Home Infant Child Care Program: Report to the Legislature* (February 2000), by the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning (CFL), evaluates the at-home infant care program, including the impact of changes made in 1999. For additional information, contact Minnesota Department of Children, Families, and Learning at 651-582-8200 or on the Web at http://cfl.state.mn.us/html/mde_home.htm.

■ *The Action Plan for Early Care and Education in Minnesota: Early Care and Education Finance Commission Final Report* (November 2000), by Minnesota Early Care and Education Finance Commission, presents the 2000 report from the Early Care and Education Finance Commission in Minnesota. After two years of study and deliberation, the Commission came up with a set of 25 recommendations for a structure of early care and education that supports families and is focused on ensuring that all children are prepared to succeed when they enter kindergarten. Among those recommendations included:

7. Change the Qualifications for the At Home Infant Care Program: This is an award-winning program. Eligibility needs to be based on the income of the family when one wage earner stays at home, rather than retrospective to the level of two wage earners. It creates another option for low and moderate income families to receive paid parental leave if their employer does not have a paid leave plan.
(page 19)

This resource is available on the Web at
http://www.earlychildpro.org/documents/AECP_2_5_01.pdf.

■ “Article 1: Children and Family Support Programs” (May 1999), in *House Research Act Summary: Chapter 205*, a 1999 Regular Session, by the Minnesota House of Representatives, states:

At-home infant child care program. Makes clarifying, eligibility and participation changes to the assistance program for eligible parents who provide full-time care for their infant up to the age of one year.

Subd. 1. Establishment. Specifies that payments under the programs are a subsidy in lieu of assistance. Requires families to be eligible or participating in the basic sliding fee program. Requires set-aside of the basic sliding fee appropriation, subject to the federal match and maintenance of effort requirements. Authorizes a year-end carry-forward of unspent funds for the basic sliding fee program, within the same biennium.

Subd. 2. Eligible families. Requires families to be participating in the basic sliding fee program or an authorized activity at the time of application.

Subd. 3. Eligible parent. Adds a definition of eligible parent. For the at-home program, an eligible parent is defined as a birth, adopted or stepparent.

Subd. 4. Assistance. Clarifies the relationship of participation in the at-home program and assistance through the basic sliding fee program. A family on the waiting list for basic sliding fee assistance may participate in the at-home program and continue to progress on the waiting list. Families who become eligible for basic sliding fee assistance while on the at-home program, must be provided assistance or placed on the top of the waiting list when they leave the at-home program. A family receiving basic sliding fee assistance may participate in the at-home program and return to the basic sliding fee program. Families who are not on the basic sliding fee waiting list may apply to the at-home program and, if eligible, be placed on the basic sliding fee waiting list.

Clarifies that the period of assistance under the at-home program is deducted from the [Minnesota Investment Family Program] MFIP work exclusion and assistance does not establish an employee-employer relationship.

Subd. 5. Implementation. Requires counties to administer the program and [Department of Children, Families, and Learning] DCFL to develop and provide information to aid parents with child care decisions.

This resource is available on the Web at <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hrd/as/81/as205.html>.

■ “Seizing the Moment to Build Momentum for Quality Infant/Toddler Child Care” (June/July 1999), in *ZERO TO THREE: Quality Care for Infants and Toddlers*, Vol. 19, No. 6, by Emily Fenichel, Erica Lurie-Hurvitz, and Abbey Griffin, published by ZERO TO THREE, National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families, includes information on strategies to improve quality in infant/toddler care. It describes the Minnesota At-Home Infant Child Care Program as follows:

The Minnesota At-Home Infant Child Care Program was established on July 1, 1998. This experimental program provides a subsidy to income-eligible families to enable one parent to stay at home with an infant under age 1. A family is

eligible for this program for a total of one year. Families may choose to segment this time if they plan to have multiple children. While a family is receiving the At-Home subsidy, none of its children may be in subsidized child care.

The program is administered on a county level and does not use Child Care and Development Fund dollars. The program is financed through Minnesota's Basic Sliding Fee Program, which provides child care subsidies to income-eligible families. Families in which all parents are engaged in an authorized work or education activity, and whose income is below 75 percent of the state median income are eligible for assistance through the Basic Sliding Fee Program. Since the program is not fully funded, assistance is not guaranteed. As a result, statewide, 6,600 families are currently on the program's waiting list.

Under the new statute, the state shall establish a pool of up to 7 percent of the state Basic Sliding Fee appropriation for the At-Home Infant Child Care Program. Families who are eligible for the Sliding Fee Program, have an infant under age 1, and have not used their one-year lifetime cap may participate. While advocates and stakeholders are pleased by the new program, many express concern that the set-aside for the At-Home Program may redirect funds from families with very few economic choices and who must work to those families with more economic flexibility to stay at home with or without the subsidy. (page 11)

Additional information for obtaining copies of this article is available on the Web at http://www.zerotothree.org/ztt_journal.html.

Additional Information

■ *TANF 2004 Policy Toolkit* (2004), by the Center for Policy Alternatives, supports the Work and Family Investment Initiative. This briefing on the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) block grant program, enacted by Congress in 1996, discusses how poverty is on the rise and the five-year lifetime limits on cash assistance is now coming into effect for many families. The briefing states that many Americans support TANF expansion and it provides a number of options for States to improve TANF, including the At-Home Infant Care (AHIC) program. Included in this resource is "2004 Policy Model: At-Home Infant Care Act," designed to be used by States to assist in drafting their own AHIC policy. This resource is available on the Web at <http://www.stateaction.org/2004agenda/43.pdf>. Additional information on the Work and Family Investment Initiative is available on the Web at <http://www.stateaction.org/programs/workandfamily/>.

■ *Public Engagement: How Do We Make Paid Family Leave a Part of the Early Care and Education System?* (January, 2004), by Anne Mitchell and Louise Stoney, Alliance on Early Childhood Finance, for Smart Start's National Technical Assistance Center, is an issue brief from the January 2004 Learning Community on Early Care & Education Finance Reform conference that discusses how to make paid family leave a part of the early care and education system. States have taken a variety of approaches to providing financial support to parents who care for newborns and infants: at-home infant care programs, unemployment compensation,

temporary disability insurance, and sick leave. Discussion questions and resources are included. This resource is available on the Web at <http://www.earlychildhoodfinance.org/handouts/5.pdf>.

■ *How to Incorporate Paid Family Leave Into Our Finance System* (January, 2003), by Smart Start National Technical Assistance Center, with Anne Mitchell and Louise Stoney, Alliance on Early Childhood Finance, is an issue brief from the January 2003 Early Care and Education Finance Reform conference that describes ways to incorporate paid family leave into the early care and education finance system (e.g., at-home infant care, unemployment compensation). More than 82 percent of employees (aged 18–34 years) say they support expanding the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to provide paid leave. Paid family leave could be the beginning of a continuum of early care and education. Questions are presented for further discussion. This resource is available on the Web at <http://smartnet.smartstart-nc.org/national/financing/paidleavebrief.doc>.

■ *At A Glance: At-Home Infant Care (AHIC)* (updated 2002), prepared by the National Partnership for Women and Families, describes a program that allows working parents who meet income requirements to receive a subsidy in lieu of child care assistance for caring for infants. This resource is available on the Web at <http://www.nationalpartnership.org/content.cfm?L1=202&DBT=Documents&NewsItemID=472>.

■ “Public Policy Update: Focus on At-Home Infant Care Legislation,” on the *Family and Home Network* Web site, provides some historical information on the AHIC programs. This resource is available on the Web at http://www.familyandhome.org/policy/infant_care.htm.

■ **Better Baby Care Campaign**

World Wide Web: www.betterbabycare.org

The Better Baby Care Campaign, a partnership project with ZERO TO THREE, is a nationwide effort to improve the early care of infants and toddlers while their parents are working, in school, or in need of out-of-home services. The campaign seeks to work in collaboration with existing national, State, and local organizations to bring attention to the issues and to improve the policies that govern the quality of care, parent education, family support, paid family leave and related policies. The State and Local Initiatives link of their Web site provides information on Minnesota’s and Montana’s AHIC programs. Additional information is available on the Web at http://www.betterbabycare.org/state_local.html.

The National Child Care Information Center does not endorse any organization, publication, or resource.

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